



Illinois Human Rights Commission

NEWS

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Illinois Human Rights Commission Endorses Anti-Bullying Legislation

***Commission also joins forces with
Prevent School Violence Illinois Coalition***

CHICAGO — The Illinois Human Rights Commission (IHRC) has unanimously endorsed HB 5290, legislation proposed by Rep. Kelly Cassidy (D-Chicago) that would build on the Illinois School Violence Act and call on the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to develop a template for a statewide model bullying prevention policy. The Commission also voted to join the Prevent School Violence Illinois Coalition.

"Despite important past efforts at the state level, bullying remains far too common of a problem in our schools. It leaves psychological as well as physical scars that hamper children's ability to gain an education. Bullying and school violence not only destroy a child's self-esteem, they have even resulted in the loss of some children's lives. We should do everything in our power to eliminate bullying from our schools," said IHRC Commission Chairman Martin R. Castro. "The Illinois Human Rights Commission commends Rep. Cassidy for her leadership in this area and we also stand ready to collaborate with and support the many committed leaders and organizations in the Prevent School Violence Illinois Coalition."

HB 5290 would require schools across the state and ISBE to implement aggressive new anti-bullying and anti-cyber-bullying measures in the 2013-2014 school year. It would also require schools to regularly update their anti-bullying policies, and to collect data on bullying incidents.

Prevent School Violence Illinois (PSVI) is a coalition of individuals, associations, governments agencies, youth service groups, and policy organizations, who are concerned with school violence. Its membership includes the Illinois Department of Human Rights, the Illinois Safe School Alliance and the ACLU of Illinois among numerous partners.

Illinois became the ninth state in the nation to enact stringent anti-bullying laws when Governor Quinn signed the Illinois Prevent School Violence Act (SB3266) into law on June 27, 2010. PSVI originally came together in order to support the legislation, designed to provide school districts with tools to prevent and address bullying. Senator Kimberly A. Lightford (D-Maywood) was the Chief Sponsor, and Senator David Koehler (D-Pekin) was the Chief Co-

Sponsor of SB3266. PSVI now supports the work of the School Bullying Prevention Task Force which was created by the Illinois Prevent School Violence Act. The Task Force is charged with exploring the causes and consequences of bullying in Illinois schools, and evaluating the effectiveness of existing anti-bullying policies and prevention programs.

For more information about the mission and membership of the IHRC, go to:
<http://www2.illinois.gov/ihrc/Pages/default.aspx>

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